

Tuesday, October 21, 2003

Assembly pulls Gravina road funding

KDN Staff

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly on Monday voted to rescind a \$500,000 appropriation for a road on Gravina Island that would connect Ketchikan's Airport to the Pacific Log and Lumber sawmill and the Lewis Reef Industrial Park.

Assembly members voted 5-2 to repeal an ordinance appropriating funds for the Lewis Reef road project because of concerns about proper planning and the borough's finances. The issue will go before the Assembly again on Nov. 3 for a public hearing.

The \$500,000 expenditure would have allowed the borough to start work on a 4-mile road that would connect the Lewis Reef Industrial Park to the airport. Eventually, the road would connect to state, federal and private land on Gravina Island. The cost of the road would depend on whether it is paved and how many lanes it has, borough staff members said. The money would come from the borough's land trust fund.

Assembly Member Sam Bergeron, who supported the idea of the road, said he couldn't justify putting money into the project when the borough had underfunded the bus system and schools.

"We need to be very careful of the remaining money in our bank accounts," he said. "Especially for what's left in the land trust fund, I think the focus is too narrow."

Assembly Member Maggie Sarber said the project has been in the works for years.

"I think there is a plan, there has been a plan and I intend to support this motion," she said.

For more information, see Joanna Markell's article in the Oct. 21, 2003, edition of the Ketchikan Daily News.